

WORK PLAN SUMMARY AND BUDGET FY 2021-2022

www.northwesthillscog.org



June 28, 2021

Ms. Melissa McCaw
CT OPM Secretary
450 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Secretary McCaw,

The Northwest Hills Council of Governments is pleased to submit this Work Plan Summary and Budget for FY 2021-2022. The document includes activities for utilization of the FY2021-22 Regional Service Grant and other sources of funding. Included are the following:

- An Overview of the NHCOCG and its Mission
- A Summary of the Work Plan Budget by Activity for FY 2021-2022
- A Summary of the Work Plan Budget by Funding Source for FY 2021-2022
- The major regional programs, projects or initiatives provided or planned under the Work Plan
- A list of the specific annual goals and objectives adopted by the NHCOCG Board for FY 2021-22

As you will see in the following pages, an extensive amount of work is proposed to be undertaken by the NHCOCG on behalf of their member towns. The NHCOCG provides the only forum for the region's chief elected officials to meet on a regular basis and discuss issues in municipal management, oversee existing regional programs, and explore additional opportunities to enhance regional cooperation. The NHCOCG's work program includes activities in both regional planning and regional service delivery to enhance local government efficiency.

We appreciate the continued support of OPM and the General Assembly as we pursue continued progress in the years ahead serving the needs of our member towns and regional citizens.

Sincerely,

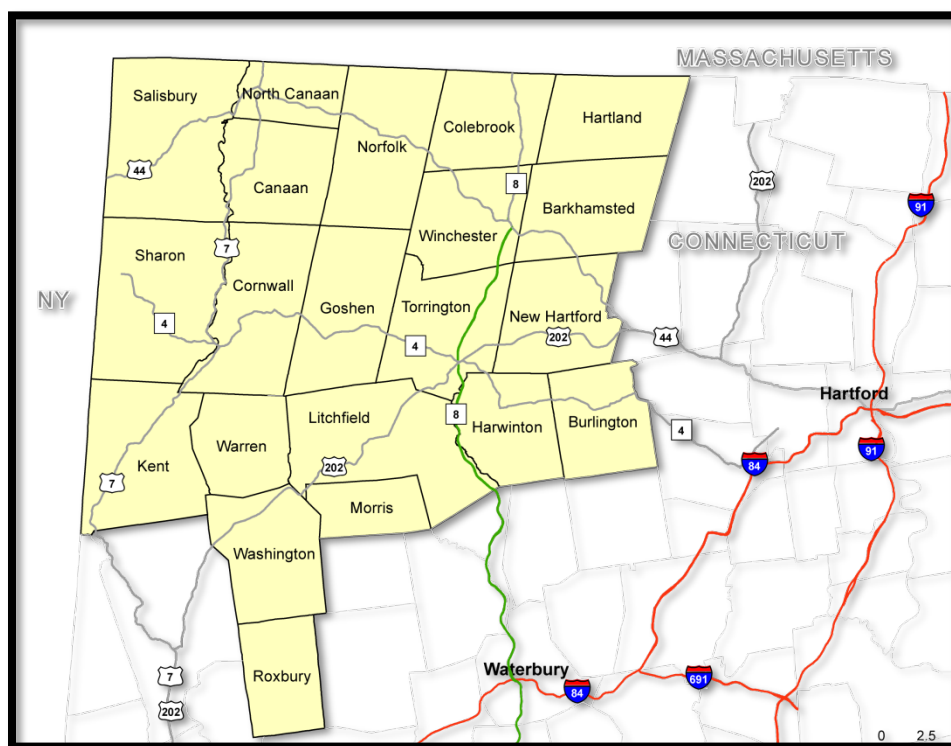
Robert A Phillips
Robert Phillips, AICP
Executive Director

Donald S. Stein
Don Stein
Chairperson

1. NHCOG OVERVIEW

The Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOG) is a coordinating body for chief elected officials maintained by twenty-one municipalities in northwest Connecticut. The twenty-one member towns are:

- Barkhamsted,
- Burlington,
- Canaan,
- Colebrook,
- Cornwall,
- Goshen,
- Hartland,
- Harwinton,
- Kent,
- Litchfield,
- Morris,
- New Hartford,
- Norfolk,
- North Canaan,
- Roxbury,
- Salisbury,
- Sharon,
- Torrington,
- Warren,
- Washington, and
- Winchester



The Northwest Hills Region is a predominately rural region with the City of Torrington serving as the regional center. Our region covers 785 square miles and has a total population of 110,102 (2019 CT DOH estimates). Our municipalities range in size from 1,053 residents (Town of Canaan) to 34,044 residents (City of Torrington). Our region also has a significant percentage of seasonal or weekend residents and second homes, many of which are not captured in Census figures. During this past year, however, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in many urban residents from New York City moving full-time to the Northwest Hills Region.

NHCOG MISSION

NHCOG’s mission is to make Northwest Connecticut a better place to live, do business, and visit by providing a forum for local officials to discuss issues of intermunicipal concern, promote regional cooperation, and direct various regional initiatives to enhance government planning, efficiency and service delivery.

The NHCOG employs a staff of four, and maintains an office in Goshen, Connecticut.

STAFF

Robert Phillips
Executive Director

Jocelyn Ayer
Community &
Economic
Development Director

Janell Mullen
Regional Planner

Darlene Krukar
Office Manager

2. SUMMARY OF NHCOG WORK PLAN BUDGET BY ACTIVITY

LAND USE PLANNING

Regional Service Grant: \$94,000
Town Contracts: \$10,000

TRANSPORTATION

ConnDOT Highway Grant: \$135,000
ConnDOT Transit Grant: \$23,625
RITS Program Grant: \$10,000
Local Dues: \$17,625
LOTICIP: \$12,500

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING

DEMHS Grant: \$35,000

HOUSING

Regional Service Grant: \$6000
Local Dues: \$500
Housing Council Contract: \$675
DOH: \$20,000

CONSERVATION

Housatonic River Commission Grant: \$2,500
Regional Services Grant: \$5,000
Local Dues: \$1000

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Regional Service Grant: \$84,000
EDA CARES: \$200,000
EDA Partnership Planning: \$60,000

RECYCLING AND MSW

Regional Service Grant: \$13,000

OTHER REGIONALLY COORDINATED SERVICES

Regional Service Grant: \$61,868
Foundation Grants: \$8,790
Local Dues: \$68,957
Obligated Carryover and Miscellaneous: \$15,775

TOTAL WORK PLAN BUDGET: \$882,640

3. SUMMARY OF NHCOC WORK PLAN BUDGET BY MAJOR FUNDING SOURCE

Local Dues: \$88,082

ConnDOT Grant: \$158,625

LOTICIP: \$12,500

RITS Grant: \$10,000

Regional Service Grant: \$263,868

DEMHS Grant: \$35,000

Municipal Assistance with Town Planning: \$10,000

Foundation Grants: \$8,790

EDA CARES: \$200,000

EDA Partnership Planning: \$60,000

Dept. of Housing: \$20,000

Other Sources (e.g. obligated carryover, miscellaneous): \$15,775

TOTAL: \$882,640

4. REGIONAL PROGRAMS, PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Below is a description of the programs, projects, and initiatives that the NHCOC is providing or planning to provide in the NHCOC region.

Land Use Planning

- Statutory planning responsibilities including Regional Plan of Conservation and Development maintenance; review of zoning and subdivision proposals along town boundaries; review of municipal plans of conservation and development (RSG: \$5,000)
- Technical support, continuing education, and workshops for town Planning and Zoning Commissions and staff(RSG: \$40,000)
- Implement Adopted Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (RSG: \$14,000)
- Town Planning Assistance (Local Contracts: \$10,000)
- GIS Coordination and Technical Assistance (RSG: \$30,000)
- Website and Social Media Updates (RSG: \$5,000)

Transportation Planning

- Highway system planning and technical assistance (ConnDOT Grant and Local Dues: \$150,000)
- Transit system planning and technical assistance (ConnDOT Grant and Local Dues: \$26,250)

- Rural Independent Transportation System (RITS) Coordination (ConnDOT Grant: \$10,000)
- LOTCIP Coordination (\$12,500)

Emergency Management Planning

- COG coordination and meetings of the Region 5 Regional Coordination Center (DEMHS Grant: \$12,000)
- Serve as Fiduciary/Oversight Agent for the 43-town DEMHS Region 5 in programming and managing Homeland Security Grant funds (DEMHS Grant \$23,000)

Housing

- Provide staff support to Regional Housing Council (RSG: \$6,000; Local dues: \$500; Housing Council contract: \$675)
- Assistance with municipal affordable housing plans as requested including housing needs data analysis (CT Dept. of Housing Grant anticipated \$20,000)

Conservation

- Provide staff support to Conservation Organizations (e.g. Greenprint Steering Committee, Greenways) (RSG: \$5,000)
- Provide staff support to Housatonic River Commission (HRC contract: \$2,500; Local dues \$1,000)

Community & Economic Development

- Pursue implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) in collaboration with the NWCT Economic Development Corporation and NWCT Chamber of Commerce (RSG: \$28,000)
- Support Rural Broadband Initiative (RSG: \$17,000)
- Share information & resources between the 21 towns' local economic development committees and business groups (RSG: \$6,000)
- Support Regional Food Hub (RSG: \$12,000)
- Support the promotion and ongoing development of the region's events, destinations, and jobs website (RSG: \$14,000)

- Outreach to encourage private investment in CEDS initiatives including the Day Trips Guides and local business directory intended to support our businesses that rely on tourism. (RSG: \$7,000)
- Administer EDA CARES funding (\$200,000) and Partnership Planning Work Program (\$60,000)

Recycling and Municipal Solid Waste

- Coordinate Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days (RSG: \$8,000)
- Monitor MSW and recycling issues and coordinate meetings of Recycling Advisory Committee (RSG: \$5,000)

Other Regionally Coordinated Municipal Services or Projects

- Administer prescription assistance funding (9 towns) (Foundation for Community Health Funding: \$7,290)
- Administer Neighbor to Neighbor Program (Berkshire Taconic Foundation: \$1,500)
- Administer Northwest Corner Fuel bank (7 towns) (RSG: \$1,500)
- Staff support for the NHCOC Legislative Committee (RSG: \$5,000)
- Assessment of Additional Regional Service Sharing Opportunities (RSG: \$10,000)
- Other Local Technical Assistance (RSG: \$10,000)
- General Office Administration/Long Term Recovery Planning (RSG: \$35,368; Local Dues: \$68,957)

NHCOG Work Plan Goals and Outcomes

July 2021 to June 2022

Goal 1: To share information and resources with and between our 21 member towns to enhance government planning, efficiency and service delivery.

Outcomes:

- Organize, facilitate, & host **11 meetings of the NHCOG** to discuss issues in municipal management, oversee existing COG programs, and explore new opportunities for regional cooperation.
- Organize, facilitate, & host 4 meetings of the **NWCT Regional Housing Council**
- Organize, facilitate & host 2 meetings of the Regional Road Supervisors Association
- Coordinate the **Public Works Equipment Cooperative**, sharing 11 pieces of equipment between 21 towns.
- Coordinate meetings of the *Northwest Hills Recycling Advisory Committee* as needed.
- Host & update **NHCOG website** and social media with news, information, and reports as they become available.
- Coordinate regional Geographic Information Systems (GIS) planning services and regularly update and enhance the **Regional GIS Web Map**.
- Convene other regional meetings as needed such as the annual “**Northwest Hills Legislative Forum**” with Area Legislators.

Goal 2: To coordinate State, local, and regional land use planning efforts.

Outcomes:

- Review and respond to approximately **35 referrals** per year of local zoning regulation and POCD changes from member towns and neighboring towns as statutorily required to make sure that proposed changes are consistent with regional and state plans and do not adversely impact neighboring towns.
- Facilitate **4 “5th Thursdays” forums for land use commission members** to get local input on the development of regional plans and provide a forum for the sharing of information between towns.
- Organize and host 1-2 training workshops for new land use board/commission members in the region.
- Pursue implementation of Regional Plan of Conservation & Development.
- Assist member towns with updates to their town plans of conservation and development and other technical planning tasks upon request and appropriate fee-for-service arrangements.

- Provide technical assistance to the Housatonic River Commission and Western CT Water Utility Coordinating Committee as needed.
- Facilitate implementation of SustainableCT initiatives and resiliency planning, including oversight of a summer intern.
- Assist towns with FEMA applications, project implementation, and updates to the **Natural Hazard Mitigation Plans** prepared within the region.

Goal 3: To facilitate transportation planning in the region.

Outcomes:

- Pursue implementation of Regional Transportation Plan and Regional Transportation Safety Plan.
- Facilitate implementation of the **bus signage and shelter plan** in cooperation with the Northwestern CT Transit District.
- Continue to coordinate NHCOC's Rural Independent Transportation System (RITS).
- Assist in planning for **Regional Transit Center** in Downtown Torrington.
- Encourage implementation of the Naugatuck River Greenway Routing Study.
- Continue to promote development of a statewide interactive website for trails, patterned after the NHCOC's **Regional Trail Map**.
- Coordinate with **regional Transportation Providers** to improve regional transportation coordination and offerings.
- Attend **Northwest Connecticut Mobility Manager Meetings** to assist regional transportation providers.

Goal 4: To facilitate emergency management planning in the region.

Outcomes:

- Facilitate meetings of the Northwest Hills Public Safety Task Force, Region 5 Regional Coordination Center, and Northwest Hills Citizen Corps Council as needed.
- Serve as **Fiduciary/Oversight Agent for DEMHS Region 5** in programming and coordinating the expenditure of Homeland Security Grant funds.
- Pursue the development of an updated roadway diversion plan for the region and create a GIS map of critical facilities.

Goal 5: To coordinate economic development efforts in the region and implement the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

Outcomes:

- Continue to coordinate efforts to implement the region's CEDS.
- Facilitate an **annual forum for local EDC members** in the NHCOC region to meet each other, hear guest speakers on topics of common interest, and provide input on CEDS implementation.
- Support the continued operations of the NWCT **Regional Food Hub** which aggregates and distributes locally grown food by increasing awareness of the Hub among the region's farmers and local food buyers. Also identify funding resources and partnerships to sustain the Hub.
- Support **Rural Broadband** initiative in partnership with NWConnect.
- Support the promotion and ongoing development of the region's events, destinations, and jobs website.
- Outreach to encourage private investment in CEDS initiatives including Day Trips Guides and online local business directory intended to support our businesses that rely on tourism.

Goal 6: Provide cost efficient, regionally coordinated services.

Outcomes:

- Coordinate 2 regional household hazardous waste disposal days.
- Administer the distribution of **\$40,000 in prescription assistance funding** (9 towns) in cooperation with the Foundation for Community Health.
- Administer the distribution of approx. **\$13,000 in Northwest Corner Fuel bank** funding (7 towns).
- Administer the **Neighbor to Neighbor Program** in cooperation with the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation.
- Facilitate the **cost-effective purchase** of treated road salt, plow blades, crack sealing services, and road regulatory and warning signs for member towns through the **Northwest Hills Cooperative Purchase Program**.
- Help with financing, bidding and construction administration of the **Litchfield Hills Regional Animal Facility** in cooperation with interested towns.
- Assess opportunities for improved MSW and recycling procedures in the region.
- Pursue other opportunities for regional service delivery as encouraged by the NHCOC Board.

Adopted by NHCOC on June 10, 2021

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Signature: Robert A. Phillips
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